

# **Citizen Trade Policy Commission**

**Friday, May 27, 2005**

State House, Room 126, Augusta

## **Meeting Summary**

**Members present:**, Rep. John Patrick (co-chair), Sen. Kevin Raye, Rep. Deborah Hutton, Matt Schlobohm, Paul Volckhausen, Bjorn Claeson, Mark Haggerty, Cynthia Phinney, Richard Coyle, Elizabeth Wyman, Vanessa Santarelli, Carla Dickstein, Peter Connell

**Members absent:** Sen. Margaret Rotundo (co-chair), Sen. Bruce Bryant, Rep. Roderick Carr, Barbara Van Burgel, Dr. Robert Weiss, Mary Ellen Johnston, James Wilfong, Jim Dusch

**Staff present:** Nicole Dube, Legislative Analyst

### **I. Introductions**

Rep. Patrick convened the Commission meeting and asked Commission members to introduce themselves.

### **II. Briefing: Maine's Economy and the Impact of Trade Agreements**

Dr. Charles Lawton, Senior Economist, Planning Decisions, Inc. provided the Commission with a general overview of Maine's economy, citing three main trends: the income-earnings paradox, the natural resources glut, and the housing boom. Dr. Lawton also discussed the impact of trade agreements on Maine's economy. (A copy of Dr. Lawton's presentation is attached)

### **III. Discussion of Commission's Annual Report and Assessment Requirements**

Rep. Patrick briefed the Commission on the Forum on Democracy and Trade Leadership Meeting on International Trade and the States, held on April 29<sup>th</sup> – May 1<sup>st</sup> in Washington DC. The meeting provided a forum for states to convene to discuss critical trade issues impacting states as well as develop and cultivate collaborative efforts. Rep. Patrick and Sen Rotundo attended the meeting on behalf of the Commission.

The Commission also received a report back from the Assessment Subcommittee indicating that they are in the process of working with the three other subcommittees (Healthcare Subcommittee, Business, Labor and Economic Development Subcommittee and Environment and Natural Resources Subcommittee) to determine the form and subject matter of the assessment. The Commission directed staff to provide a list of other state trade commissions as well as an example of an assessment conducted by another state.

#### **IV. Scheduling the Next Public Hearing**

The Commission decided to hold its next public hearing in October at a location in Aroostook County. The Commission directed staff to email potential dates for the public hearing to the Commission. The Commission also discussed how it can do a better job of reaching out to all sides of the issues surrounding trade agreements so that they receive comprehensive information at its future public hearings. Potential strategies identified included utilizing the Aroostook County legislative delegation to inform constituents of the public hearing and increasing advertising to encourage participation from those in the business community and those in support of trade agreements. The Commission also discussed potentially inviting leaders from the metal, forest products and exporter industries to a future meeting.

#### **V. Discussion of the June 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

The Commission agreed to gather individual and subcommittee data requests and questions by June 10<sup>th</sup> to send to Christina Sevilla from the Office of the United States Trade Representative in advance of her briefing to the Commission scheduled for June 24<sup>th</sup>.

#### **VI. Commission Response to CAFTA**

Commission member, Bjorn Claeson provided the Commission with a draft statement in opposition to DR-CAFTA for consideration by the Commission. The Commission members present voted to unanimously adopt an amended version of the statement, pending review of the final language. Bjorn Claeson agreed to email the final revised statement to the Commission no later than Tuesday, May 31<sup>st</sup> for final approval. The Commission noted that DR-CAFTA is scheduled for a mock mark up in the Senate Finance Committee on June 14<sup>th</sup> after which it will be considered by the House Ways and Means Committee. Given the short time frame in which DR-CAFTA is being considered in Congress, the Commission agreed to conduct immediate media work around the release of its statement. The Commission directed staff to:

- Draft a press release
- Schedule a press conference at the Statehouse for the week of June 6<sup>th</sup>
- Send a copy of the statement to newspaper editorial boards along with an offer from the Commission Chairs to meet with them to discuss the statement
- Email the statement to interested parties
- Contact Congressional Delegation staff to determine if they are available to meet with the Commission on June 17<sup>th</sup> to follow up on DR-CAFTA.

#### **VII. Introduction of Legislation this Session**

The Commission received an update from the legislation subcommittee indicating that they were unable to complete legislation in time to be considered this legislative session and will continue to work on developing legislation for possible consideration during the Second Session of the 122<sup>nd</sup> Legislature.

## **VIII. USTR State Request on GATS**

The Commission reviewed a draft letter in response to a May 3<sup>rd</sup> USTR memo to the State Points of Contact (SPOCs) and the Intergovernmental Policy Advisory Committee (IGPAC) asking for comments regarding ongoing negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). The draft response from the Commission asked that USTR carve out Maine state and local government actions from the new GATS offer scheduled to be tabled by May 31<sup>st</sup> until the Commission has had an opportunity to adequately review and analyze the language of the proposed commitment. The Commission members present voted unanimously to adopt the letter with minor revisions and send it immediately to USTR.

## **IX. Sub-committee Work Session**

The Commission broke into its three subcommittees (healthcare, environment/natural resources and labor/economic development) to continue to work on the Commission's annual assessment. The full Commission then reconvened and each subcommittee briefed the Commission on its work.

## **X. Adjournment.**

The Commission adjourned its meeting at approximately 3:00PM